COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
June 20, 2013

COMMUNITY WETLAND RESTORATION GRANT PROGRAM

Project No. 12-026-01
Project Manager: Greg Gauthier

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Conservancy approval of the 2013 Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program projects pursuant to its August 2, 2012 authorization.

LOCATION: Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego counties coastal wetlands and watersheds.

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Project Locations Map

Exhibit 2: 2013 CWRGP Projects Summary Table

Exhibit 3: August 2, 2012 Conservancy Authorization

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code:

"Pursuant to its August 2, 2012 authorization approving the Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program (CWRGP), the State Coastal Conservancy hereby approves the CWRGP 2013 projects as more specifically described in the accompanying staff recommendation. Prior to the disbursement of funds for each project, Earth Island Institute shall submit for review and approval by the Executive Officer of the Conservancy:

a. A work program, including a project plan, schedule and budget;

b. All contractors to be employed for the project; and

c. Evidence that all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed projects are consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
2. The proposed projects are consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 6 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding enhancement of coastal resources.
3. The Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council, Once Upon a Watershed, Ventura Hillsides Conservancy, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Heal the Bay, Back to Natives Restoration, Earthroots, Heritage Museum of Orange County and the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation all are nonprofit organizations existing under Section 501 (c) (3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy approve the suite of 2013 Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program (CWRGP) projects pursuant to its authorization of funding for the CWRGP on August 2, 2012 (See Exhibit 3).

CWRGP is a program of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) jointly managed by the State Coastal Conservancy and Earth Island Institute, which provides funding annually for community-based restoration projects in coastal wetlands and watersheds in the Southern California region. The purpose of CWRGP is to further the wetland recovery goals of the WRP Regional Strategy; build local capacity to plan and implement wetland restoration projects; promote community involvement in wetland restoration activities; and foster education about wetland ecosystems. Projects funded through the program must include educational and community involvement elements as strong components of the project.

CWRGP typically funds 10 to 12 projects per year with an annual budget of approximately $300,000. Each January, CWRGP solicits proposals from nonprofit organizations, university departments, and local agencies eligible to apply to the CWRGP. Proposals are reviewed by a technical advisory committee that includes staff from the Conservancy, Earth Island Institute, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and other WRP partner agencies. Projects are selected by early summer with the work beginning in late summer or early fall. Projects funded through the CWRGP are designed to be completed in one or two years.

Project selection for the 2013 CWRGP was completed in May, 2013. All of this year's projects are proposed by nonprofit 501(c) 3 organizations. The 9 projects selected to be funded this year are as follows:

Santa Barbara County

Mission Canyon Cape Ivy Eradication Project
The Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council's proposed project will eradicate infestations of Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*), Kikuyu grass (*Penisetum clandestinum*), and small populations of other

non-native pest plants including Smilo grass (*Pipthatherum miliaceum*) and Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) that have become established on upper Mission Creek adjacent to the Santa Barbara water tunnel. A contractor and volunteers will manually dig out the invasive plants, load them into vehicles, and haul them to the county transfer station. In order to ensure complete eradication, three main rounds of invasives removal are proposed. The work will be done systematically working from the streambed toward the top of the slope. The Cape ivy covering the shrubs will simply be pulled off the native vegetation, and the rhizomes will be dug out using hand held weeding tools. Volunteers will be trained to sift through the soil to ensure the fewest re-sprouts. The Kikuyu grass population will be dug out using shovels and spading forks. All weed material will be immediately bagged in heavy duty plastic to avoid unintentional escape during disposal. The contractor and volunteers will collect native seed from adjacent areas and broadcast them on the slope before the first rain of each season. Canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides)* would be the primary seed applied. Seeds of chaparral shrubs including Greenbark Lilac (*Ceanthus spinosus*), Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and Holly-leaved Cherry (*Prunus illicifolia*) would also be broadcast on the slope.

Several more volunteer work days will take place so that by the summer of 2014 there again will be no visible invasives in the project area. Volunteers and the contractor would again broadcast native seed on the slope before the first rains of the 2014-2015 Winter. A third and final round of weeding would follow the rainy season in 2015.

The Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council will reach out to their mailing list of active members, work with the Mission Canyon Association and their volunteer base, and actively recruit additional volunteers from the hundreds of people who walk by the site every day. Volunteer participation in the project will help expand the capacity of the City of Santa Barbara to plan and implement other riparian restoration efforts in the future.

Total project cost: $10,800 Amount requested from WRP: $10,800

Ventura County

Healthy Watershed Series

The proposed Once Upon a Watershed's Healthy Watershed Series project will provide restoration, hands-on watershed education, and stewardship experiences to more than 600 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students throughout the Ventura River watershed. The project is correlated with the California Science Content Standards. Students will be involved in planting acorns, restoring native plants and trash removal activities at the Ojai Meadow Preserve, the Ventura River estuary, and the Ventura River Steelhead Preserve. This project is designed to create greater stewardship and understanding in local communities, bringing students into their own watershed for restoration and education. The project will include students from 10 schools along the Ventura River, teachers and parent chaperones.

The Once Upon a Watershed program has developed collaborative relationships over the years with many conservation and educational organizations in the local area, including Oak Grove School, the Ventura and Ojai Unified School Districts, Ventura Hillsides Conservancy, the California Conservation Corps, the Surfrider Foundation, and the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy.

The ten schools Once Upon a Watershed works with represent a wide range of ethnicities and socioeconomic conditions. The largest minority group served is the Hispanic/ Latino community. Of the eight schools for which information is available, two have Hispanic or Latino student populations above 85%, with the remaining five schools having Hispanic or Latino students making up 19%-41% of the total student population. In two schools, over 88% of its students are on the free or reduced lunch program. In the remaining six schools, 20%-59% of the students are on the free or reduced lunch program. (Source: California Department of Education, accessed via Great Schools website (http://www.greatschools.net/). (All data from 2008-2009.) The Healthy Watershed Series project will allow many children, including disadvantaged youth, access to experiences in "wild" natural places that they would not have otherwise.

Total Project Cost: $58,850 Amount requested from WRP: $29,550

Ventura River Upper Estuary Volunteer Restoration & Wetland Education
The Ventura Hillsides Conservancy's proposed project will directly engage local volunteers to restore wetland habitat, remove non-native vegetation and trash, and prevent illegal camping and dumping on the Willoughby Preserve in the upper Ventura River estuary. The project also will create a new trail network that would connect to Emma Wood State Beach trails and the Ventura-to-Ojai bike path. All of these activities will take place during 12 monthly wetland restoration and education events, during in-school presentations and school field trips, and at 8 volunteer bird monitoring events.

Volunteers of all ages are expected to participate in this project, including parents, K-12 teachers, students, retirees, low-income and at-risk youth, and college students. To build additional community awareness and volunteer capacity, this project will also provide in-class watershed education presentations, field trips to the river and volunteer service learning opportunities for youth living in the Ventura River watershed. The project will engage project participants in hands-on wetland restoration fieldwork and water quality monitoring demonstrations.

Total project cost: $53,200 Amount requested from WRP: $27,800

Los Angeles County

Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project
The proposed Los Angeles Conservation Corps Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project will engage the community in habitat restoration of 3,000 square feet along Ballona Creek. The project will provide plants to expand native habitat, remove the exotic species and plant 2,600 square feet of an existing habitat restoration area.

The project will host monthly community-based volunteer events to provide training and hands-on experience for local volunteers and students. Volunteers will learn native plant identification, benefits of drought tolerant plants, wetland ecology and habitat restoration techniques. In addition the project will provide opportunities for two corporate volunteer events. The goal of

the regular volunteer events is to foster a sense of community ownership of the restoration project.

Through the Science Education Adventure Laboratory program (SEA Lab), the project will train six inner-city youth in native plant identification, habitat restoration, and nursery operations. Innovative technologies of native plant production and ecological water treatment will be transferred to SEA Lab corpsmembers through classroom instruction of system design based on wetland habitats and functions, aquatic food webs, and works of Buckminster Fuller, John Todd, and H.T. Odum, and through hands-on instruction of system assembly, operation, maintenance, harvest, and restoration planting.

During initial training, the corpsmembers will choose an area of interest: Nursery/Plant Production; Irrigation and Maintenance; Site Preparation and Planting, or Education and Outreach. Each corpsmember will be provided additional training applicable to his/her placement. Corpsmembers will complete various tasks throughout the project period including, but not limited to: seed collecting at natural areas around Ballona Wetlands and other areas within the Santa Monica Bay ecosystem; nursery construction and expansion; germinating and growing seedlings; installing and testing irrigation, and performing education and outreach sessions for visitors at the SEA Lab and volunteers at the project sites.

Total project cost: $57,300 Amount requested from WRP: $25,500

Compton Creek Pilot Restoration Project
The proposed Compton Creek Pilot Restoration Project to be led by Heal the Bay will examine restoration scenarios for the soft-bottom portion of Compton Creek involving hands-on restoration efforts; promote community involvement in restoration activities through its partnership with the City of Compton; build capacity by working closely with local community-based organizations and policymakers committed to enhancing the region; and foster comprehensive watershed education among youth through established partnerships with local high schools and colleges. Additionally, Heal the Bay will work closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for technical guidance and to facilitate the permitting needed to support project objectives.

Project staff will recruit 3-5 community partners from local high schools and colleges to adopt a section of the creek for hands-on restoration. Staff will conduct classroom-based presentations on watersheds and the Compton Creek ecosystem, covering native plant species that will be used in the restoration. Using a USACE-approved plant palette, project staff will work with consultants to finalize planting plans and to purchase plants.

Heal the Bay staff will guide on-site pilot restoration activities and will oversee the implementation of pilot restoration activities in the restoration area. Project staff will lead up to two creek education days as well as weeding and planting days during Earth Month inviting the community to restore a section of Compton Creek. Project partners will plant their sections as well.

Project staff will assess pilot restoration project outcomes during site visits at post-restoration

events. Staff will also lead a maintenance day on Coastal Cleanup Day in September to bring the community and partners back together to celebrate.

Heal the Bay currently provides California Standards-aligned environmental education curriculum, field study, and stewardship opportunities for high school and college students attending schools located within the Compton Creek Watershed. Current partners include: Compton High School, King Drew Medical Magnet High School, Fremont High School, Harriet Tubman High School, Centennial High School, Dominguez High School, El Camino College, Compton Center, Los Angeles Southwest College, Long Beach City College, and California State University-Dominguez Hills. Heal the Bay will provide these students with opportunities to participate in ongoing learning, restoration, and research activities to support the Compton Creek Pilot Restoration Project.

Total project cost: $30,000 Amount requested from WRP: $30,000

Orange County

Big Oak Canyon Habitat Restoration
Earthroots' proposed Big Oak Canyon Habitat Restoration project will restore wetland habitat in a seasonal tributary that feeds into the perennial Shrewsbury Spring, which flows to Silverado Creek in Orange County's Silverado Canyon. Project objectives include restoring the aboveground riparian corridor by clearing the area of invasive plants, transplanting locally sourced native vegetation, implementing ecologically sound erosion control measures, creating a dry-season, low impact camping area for school groups, and providing opportunities for hands-on ecological education for volunteers and ongoing education for future visitors.

The project will be a collaborative effort in partnership with local nonprofit agencies including Naturalists for You, Orange County Conservation Corps, and Back to Natives Restoration as well as volunteers from groups including OneOC, Vista Verde Elementary School, Journey School, Earthroots Field School, the Palo Alto Unitarian Universalist Church, Silverado Children's Center, and Silverado Canyon neighbors.

The project will clear the area of invasive plants including ivy, perennial and annual grasses, eucalyptus, non-native pine, bird of paradise, oleander, and Italian cypress. The project site will be planted with native seedlings in the riparian zone and existing native vegetation will be preserved including poison oak, California blackberry, mugwort, sedge nettle, broad leaf maple, mule fat, willow, and ash. Finally, a low impact, dry season campsite will be established in the project area for school groups. During the dry months of April through November, the area will accommodate campers who will learn about wild edibles, local animals, medicinal plants, and survival skills.

Throughout the summer months, Earthroots will work with Tree of Life Nursery and Back to Natives Restoration to propagate native seedlings to be transplanted in the restoration sites. Training sessions for the Orange County Conservation Corps participants and local school and community groups will be held at the start of the rainy season. Participants will be educated about site hazards (including poison oak and wildlife), tool safety, removal of non-native plants,

transplanting of native vegetation, and native plant maintenance. As a result of being directly involved in the project, volunteers will learn about the ecological significance of wetlands, and the importance of preserving and restoring native habitats.

Total project cost: $39,600 Amount requested from WRP: $30,000

Gospel Swamp Natural Area Restoration Program

The Heritage Museum of Orange County's proposed Gospel Swamp Natural Area Restoration Program will restore 2 acres of wetland habitat and an additional 2 acres of buffer habitat surrounding the marsh. Through the project they will establish the 4th Saturday of every month as Gospel Swamp Community Days. Volunteer projects such as exotics removal, planting, and trail work will be held on these days. In addition, the community will be encouraged to come and enjoy the natural area for passive recreation, contemplation and bird watching activities.

Through the proposed project the Heritage Museum will involve volunteers in the restoration work. They will first identify appropriate vegetation communities and find model sites upon which to base the restoration. They will next remove non-native invasive plants utilizing hand, chemical (when appropriate and necessary) and mechanized methods. Plant stock will be acquired from nurseries and on-site production, and an irrigation system will be established for temporary water supply. Finally they will plant native plants utilizing the model sites as a guide for density and diversity levels and then begin a monitoring program to track success of the restoration project.

The project also will develop ecological educational programs for specific grade levels. All of these programs will include a restoration element and activity. These programs will compliment the Heritage Museum's established educational programs including the "First Californians" and the "California Gold Rush" which include strong ethnobotanical and natural history elements and themes.

In addition to formal programs, Godinez Fundamental High School, which borders the Natural Area, encourages partnerships with the Heritage Museum by encouraging its science classes to utilize the site for outside-the-classroom educational experiences. Godinez students also regularly volunteer at the Museum and have begun to use the site for senior projects as well.

The Heritage Museum also utilizes the Natural Area for educational programs for Mitchell Child Development Center, the Museum's Neighbor to the south which provides preschool services to Santa Ana Unified School District and provides services for special needs children. These students, many of whom have been diagnosed with autism, have come to the Gospel Swamp Natural Area to explore and discover the world of the wetlands.

As part of the Gospel Swamp Natural Area programs, The Heritage Museum has created an internship program and will train at least two interns from Cal Poly Pomona and Chapman University to will help with the restoration efforts.

Total project cost: $56,000 Amount requested from WRP: $30,000

Santiago Park Nature Reserve Restoration
The proposed Santiago Park Nature Reserve project will remove non-native plant species and plant native plants along a reach of Santiago Creek within the Reserve. Community volunteers will learn about the importance of biodiversity and habitat restoration, as they perform community service to improve the Reserve for both wildlife and humans.

The primary education priority addressed will be community stewardship. The project will educate volunteers about the issue of invasive plants and make them aware of the need to restore habitat for the benefit of biodiversity.

The program is also intended to introduce youth volunteers to potential science careers and generate interest in the environment. Volunteers will learn what it is like to be a restoration ecologist, as they participate in the entire restoration process, from beginning to end.

Participants will visit the project site in August for educational hikes and to learn about the natural history of the ecosystem. With the help of consulting biologists, volunteers will perform belt transects to survey the plants present and wildlife surveys to examine the species currently using the area. This will give them the opportunity to interact with individuals who have a career in science while also collecting scientific data.

In the fall they will collect seed for use later at the restoration site. In winter as the rains begin they will return to the project site to spread native plant seed and remove non-native vegetation. In the spring, the students will monitor the ecosystem again to determine if any new species have moved into the area, and remove any invasives that they missed.

Students will also help propagate native plants at the Back to Natives Nursery at Santiago Park to plant in the restoration site. The Nursery is located within the park, so participants will have the opportunity to spend time propagating plants and removing non-natives during the same volunteer event.

Total project cost: $81,900 Amount requested from WRP: $30,000

San Diego County

Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve North Shore Restoration – Phase I
The Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation's proposed project will restore habitat along a section of the North Shore of the Batiquitos Lagoon. The project will replace non-native eucalyptus and palms with native tree species to improve bird nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat. Additionally the project will restore wetland habitat adjacent to the lagoon. Project volunteers and staff will harvest native seeds and plants as a key component to support and help sustain future restoration efforts.

This project is the first phase of additional restoration efforts to follow. The project consists of initial planning for non-native tree removal and other invasive plant species and identification of a native plant palette for restoration.

This will be followed by public outreach and volunteer recruitment to implement the plan. Volunteer training will include education about data collection methodology, working in sensitive habitats, safety procedures and use of hand equipment and restoration tools. After training is complete the project proponent will lead project site preparation and invasives removal followed by replanting with native species.

The Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation has established partnerships Tree of Life Nursery, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the adjacent Park Hyatt – Aviara Golf Course to provide technical expertise and project support.

The Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation has a large volunteer base established through its Weed-Whacking and Trail Maintenance program and will utilize this volunteer base as part of the proposed project. Additionally, they have a high school and college student internship program and intend to utilize these interns as restoration team leaders.

Total project cost: $244,000 Amount requested from WRP: $23,300

The proposal evaluation and project selection committee, described earlier in this report, will review and select projects from the 2014 project proposals consistent with this authorization for funding in the 2014 – 2015 program year. In addition to direct project costs, funding will help support project management and technical support for project proponents. Earth Island Institute staff costs are covered by them as a part of matching funds.

Site Description:

The Community Wetlands Restoration Program (CWRGP) encompasses the Southern California coastal region from Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to the United States border with Mexico (Exhibit 1). This region includes Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties. Coastal watersheds that drain to the Pacific Ocean are included in the geographic scope of the program. Project locations include coastal wetlands, tidal marshes, rivers, streams, vernal pools as well as buffer zones including dunes, river banks and coastal sage scrub habitats.

Many of the project locations were historical flood plains and extensive wetland ecosystems that have been degraded and fragmented over the past 100 years. Others are discreet pocket wetlands that, while small and sometimes isolated from other habitat, cumulatively comprise a critical natural resource for native flora and fauna in a highly urbanized environment.

Below are site descriptions for the nine projects selected for the 2013 CWRGP.

Mission Canyon Cape Ivy Eradication Project
The proposed project site is on the main fork of Mission Creek at the terminus of the Santa Barbara water tunnel at an elevation of approximately 1000 feet. The project lies entirely within a parcel owned by the City of Santa Barbara. The Tunnel Trail access road crosses a bridge, and a steep slope rises to the south and west.

The native vegetation at the project site consists of chaparral and scattered Coast Live Oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) on the north facing slope, with riparian vegetation in the stream corridor including Western Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) and California Bay (*Umbellularia californica*).

The main infestation of Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata)* stretches from the bridge approximately two hundred linear feet upstream, from the streambed up the slope to an average of fifty feet. Small patches of ivy occur on the north bank of the stream and on the southeast side of the bridge. A small population of Kikuyu grass (*Penisetum clandestinum*) occurs in the streambed. The ivy is blanketing much of the north-facing slope, in many places completely obscuring the chaparral shrubs on which it is growing, including Greenbark California Lilac (*Ceanothus spinosus*), Holly-leaved Cherry (*Prunus illicifolia*), and Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*).

Once Upon a Watershed's Healthy Watershed Series

The proposed project sites for the Healthy Watershed Series are at the Ventura River Steelhead Preserve, the Ojai Meadow Preserve and the Ventura River estuary and beach. These sites are all within the Ventura River watershed.

The Ventura River Steelhead Preserve is a 65 acre preserve located on the Ventura River adjacent to Casitas Springs between Ventura and Ojai. The Ventura River Steelhead Preserve protects rare wildlife, including the endangered Southern California steelhead. Ojai Meadow Preserve is a 58-acre wetland restoration project owned by the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. The oak woodland and restored wetland are buffers for the riparian ecosystem and waters flowing into the Ventura River from the Ojai Valley. The Ventura River estuary and beach are located in the City of Ventura.

Ventura River Upper Estuary Volunteer Restoration & Wetland Education

The Willoughby Preserve project site consists of the Ventura River bottom between US HWY 101, State HWY 33, the Main Street Bridge and an RV Park on the western edge of downtown Ventura. The area is undeveloped and located within the 100-year floodplain.

The active river channel flows through the western portion of the site and has good quality riparian habitat. The eastern half of the Preserve consists of about 3.5 acres of Arundo-compromised mulefat scrub habitat in what would otherwise be good quality riparian habitat.

Listed species including Steelhead trout, Tidewater goby, Least bell's vireo, and Southwestern willow flycatcher are known to use this stretch of the river. In between large swaths of *Arundo donax* and other non-native, invasive vegetation, patches of wetland vegetation exist on site and range from willow, cottonwood, black walnut, and elderberry to mulefat. In addition to *Arundo donax*, invasive species at the site include tree tobacco, scotch broom, thistle, nasturtium, cape ivy and vinca.

Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project

The Playa del Rey Habitat Restoration Project site runs along the southern bank of Ballona Creek and is adjacent to the Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbors vehicle parking lot. It is neighbored to the east by Del Rey Lagoon and to the west by the Pacific Ocean beach. It is

adjacent to the Ballona Creek Bridge and bike path. The area is heavily degraded and was once planted with exotic ornamental plants. The project area contains large areas of ice plant and invasive grasses.

Compton Creek Pilot Restoration Project

Heal the Bay's Compton Creek Pilot Restoration Project will focus its efforts on the soft-bottom portion of Compton Creek, a 3.75 acres stretch of wetlands and 750 feet of stream corridor located within the Compton Creek Watershed. The Creek, which is on the State's list of impaired waterbodies, drains portions of the City of Los Angeles (Watts, Vermont Knolls), South Gate, Lynwood, Compton, and Los Angeles County (Florence/Firestone, Willowbrook, Athens), before discharging into the Los Angeles River and San Pedro Bay.

Compton Creek contains a high concentration of untreated urban runoff and litter, and is often used as an illegal dumping site. Compton Creek exists in an ecosystem that has been significantly and systemically altered.

The soft-bottom portion of the Creek is the native home of cattails (*Typha latifolia*), mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia),* and various types of rushes. The upland area is home to the sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), and lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*). Many native birds can be observed in the skies above the area: the Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, American Coot, Mallard, Northern Mockingbird, Red-tailed Hawk, and Goldfinch. Non-native plants include the cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*), English plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), ox tongue (*Picris echioides*), sweet clover (*Melilotus albus*), sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), and wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*). Additional invasive plant species grow in the upland area of the creek, such as castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), and tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*).

Big Oak Canyon Habitat Restoration

Big Oak Canyon, a 39-acre property in Silverado Canyon, is a rugged parcel of land that hosts a variety of native ecosystems and borders Cleveland National Forest, which opens to 424,000 acres of hiking trails and natural resources. It is a unique and ecologically rich place at the intersection of suburban communities, rural areas, and wilderness.

The proposed restoration site at Big Oak Canyon was historically a natural, seasonal tributary that feeds into Shrewsbury Spring, which flows to Silverado Creek. Silverado Creek is a tributary of Santiago Creek, one of the largest tributaries of the Santa Ana River, which flows to the Pacific Ocean after traveling through the cities of Orange, Santa Ana, then between Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach.

Big Oak Canyon was recently acquired by Earthroots, a nonprofit educational organization as a dedicated space for the organization's nature connection and environmental education programs, providing opportunities for young people to engage meaningfully with the land through nature awareness and sustainable living skills. The property has three pre-developed graded terraces for staging activities, a spring that flows year-round, and an orchard. Earthroots' vision is to create an educational working farm in the existing orchard area and to sustain or restore the riparian

area around Shrewsbury Spring to its natural state.

The perennial spring at the proposed restoration site is named for the Shrewsbury family, settlers of Silverado Canyon, who, around the mid-1800s, resided at the property now known as Big Oak Canyon. The Shrewsbury family kept bees and produced honey, grew a variety of nuts and fruits, and raised sheep. Prior to the Shrewsbury family's residence, Big Oak was home to a community of Spanish settlers in the late 1700s, and for thousands of years before that, home to the Acjachemen and Tongva people.

More recently, this area was graded and the tributary was piped underground to allow a homestead site for previous residents of Big Oak Canyon. In 2008, the two homes were demolished and removed, leaving a scarred, weed-filled terrace. As a result of storms in December of 2010, the underground pipe carrying seasonal water flow to Shrewsbury tributary burst, causing erosion to the flattened area where the homes once stood. Without being cared for, this area will continue to erode, damaging the land and introducing invasive plants further down the watershed.

Gospel Swamp Natural Area Restoration Program

The natural lands at the Heritage Museum of Orange County cover an area of approximately four and one-half acres. It is anchored at the west and east ends by remnant wetlands and riparian forests totaling approximately two-acres. Between the wetlands are 20-30 foot-high mounds of river sediment dredged from the nearby Santa Ana River in the early 1980's. On these slopes grow a mixture of coastal sage scrub and annual grasses. A woodland of mixed oaks and Southern California black walnuts also grows above the larger of the two mashes.

The wetlands are in degraded condition. Drought, invasive plant introductions and misuse have taken a toll on the habitat quality, though this appears to be an edge effect as the interior of the marshes are less disturbed. The soil structure throughout both marsh areas has not been impacted significantly except for some recent disturbance at the west marsh.

Core plant species are present throughout both marsh lands and include bulrush, cattail and various sedges. The edges of both marshes are lined with riparian forests of willow and cottonwood trees.

The riparian habitat attracts birds that use the river as a guiding flyway. More than 150 bird species that utilize the site have been identified including Gnatcatchers and Least Bell's Vireos. Due to the poor condition of the habitat, these species have not stayed to nest on site.

Santiago Park Nature Reserve Restoration

Santiago Park Nature Reserve is located between the 5 and 22 freeways in Santa Ana, California. Santiago Creek passes through the Reserve on its way to the Santa Ana River, then to the Pacific Ocean, 15 miles to the southwest. Throughout the Reserve, invasive fountain grass, *Pennisetum setaceum*, pampass grass, mustards, fennel, castor bean and other species of non-native plants have taken root and are spreading west toward the Santa Ana River. The Reserve contains a mixture of habitats, including riparian woodland and willow scrub, with some coastal sage scrub.

Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve North Shore Restoration – Phase I
The Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve is a coastal wetland north of San Diego between the cities of Carlsbad and Encinitas. The lagoon consists of 610 acres with a drainage basin of about 55,000 acres. The Reserve is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as a nature reserve.

Many different types of birds are found at Batiquitos Lagoon, and the overall bird population shifts dramatically with the seasons. More than 180 species have been recorded at Batiquitos Lagoon at different times of year.

The project area contains wetland, riparian, and coastal sage habitat on both Reserve and Park Hyatt – Aviara Golf Course property. The project site has many invasive trees including eucalyptus, Tamarisk, palms, and Brazilian pepper. Other invasive plant species on the site include pampas grass, fennel, castor bean, tree tobacco, and wild radish. The coastal sage habitat restoration area is generally open and disturbed, but has a good covering of native grasses. In the lagoon wetland and bordering areas, there is 1.75 acres of disturbed habitat and a 476 foot small stream corridor, resulting from storm water runoff from the adjacent area, containing cattails and Tamarisk. This wetland area has large swaths of salt marsh and mudflats, with a significant accumulation of trash.

Project History:

The Southern California WRP is a partnership of 18 state and federal agencies, working in concert with local governments, environmental organizations and the business community to acquire, restore and enhance coastal wetlands and watersheds.

At the WRP's October 2000 symposium, there was clear consensus that in order to be successful the WRP needed a strong education and community outreach component to its programs. The Small Grants Program, now named the Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program (CWRGP), was conceived as a way to further this objective while also building institutional capacity in the five counties for planning and implementing restoration projects.

In January 2001, at the same time that proposals were solicited to update the WRP Work Plan, applications for the formerly-entitled Small Grant Program (now CWRGP) were posted on the WRP's website and a program announcement was emailed to over 800 people. The WRP nonprofit partner, Environment Now, housed the program for the first 8 years.

Since its inception, CWRGP has completed 98 projects with a total of $2,422,000 in funding. Several of the organizations initially funded through the CWRGP have gone on to develop and implement larger scale acquisition and restoration projects for inclusion on the WRP Work Plan. The list of such organizations includes the Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy, San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, the City of Santa Barbara, South Coast Habitat Restoration, Mountains Restoration Trust, the City of Costa Mesa, and Orange County Coastkeeper. These and other organizations underscore CWRGP's ability to help develop the skills and capacity in groups,

through small project design and implementation, to take on larger projects for the purpose of Southern California wetlands recovery.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy Approved August 2, 2012*	$650,000
Earth Island Institute	$900,000
Total Project Costs	$1,550,000

***(Note: Funding for CWRGP projects was authorized by the Conservancy on August 2, 2012. Project financing information is provided here for reference purposes only.)**

For additional project financing discussion, please see the Conservancy's August 2, 2012 authorization (Exhibit 3).

The funding for the nine projects recommended for approval in this authorization total up to $641,650. Of that amount, up to $236,950 is anticipated to come from the Conservancy's August 2, 2012 authorization of funds and the remaining up to $404,700 is anticipated to come from private and federal funding sources. Future CWRGP projects anticipated for funding under the August 2, 2012 Conservancy authorization will be brought to the Conservancy for specific project approval.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed authorization for approval of the 2013 suite of CWRGP projects is undertaken pursuant to Chapter 6 of Division 21, Sections 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code, regarding coastal resource enhancement projects. Consistent with Section 31251, "(t)he conservancy may award grants to nonprofit organizations for the purpose of enhancement of coastal resources that, because of indiscriminate dredging or filling, improper location of improvements, natural or human-induced events, or incompatible land uses, have suffered loss of natural and scenic values." All of the projects in the 2013 suite of projects for the CWRGP are led by nonprofit organizations. Four of the proposed projects (Playa del Rey, Compton Creek, Gospel Swamp, and Batiquitos Lagoon) address restoration of habitat which has been degraded due to human impacts. The other five projects have suffered loss of natural habitat values because of natural or human-induced events that have introduced invasive and non-native species into the project sites.

Consistent with Section 31251.2, the Conservancy may award grants to enhance a watershed resource partly outside of the coastal zone. The Compton Creek project is located within the coastal draining Los Angeles River watershed partly outside the coastal zone. The Santiago Park Nature Reserve, Big Oak Canyon and Gospel Swamp projects are located within the coastal draining Santa Ana River watershed partly outside the coastal zone. All four of these projects have the support of the local agencies having jurisdiction over the entire project area. The Compton Creek project has the support of the City of Compton and Los Angeles County. The Santiago Park Nature Reserve and Gospel Swamp projects have the support of the County of

Orange and The City of Santa Ana. The Big Oak Canyon project has the support of the County of Orange.

Consistent with Section 31252 all areas proposed for resource enhancement by a state agency, local public agency, or nonprofit organization shall be identified in a certified local coastal plan or program as requiring public action to resolve existing or potential resource protection problems or shall be so identified in other local plans which the commission determines to be consistent with the policies and objectives of Division 20 (commencing with Section 30000). The Mission Cape Ivy Eradication Project, Once Upon a Watershed's Healthy Watershed Series, Ventura River Upper Estuary Volunteer Restoration & Wetland Education Project, Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project, and Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve North Shore Restoration Project all are identified in as resolving existing or potential resource protection problems. See Consistency with Local Coastal Program Policies section, below. The Compton Creek Project supports the Compton Creek Watershed Management Plan and Compton Creek Watershed Implementation Strategy created and authorized by the Conservancy in June 2005. The Santiago Park Nature Reserve Project, Gospel Swamp Project, and Big Oak Canyon Project support the County of Orange General Plan, The projects specifically further the goals of the County of Orange General Plan to "protect the ecological integrity and overall health of Orange's watersheds" and to "preserve and protect native and habitat-supporting plant resources" by restoring native plant species and other resources in the Santa Ana River Watershed.

Consistent with Section 31253, the recommended amount of funding is determined by evaluating the total amount of funding available to the Conservancy for coastal resource enhancement projects, the fiscal resources of each applicant, the urgency of the project relative to other similar projects, and the application of other factors prescribed by the Conservancy for the purpose of determining project eligibility and priority. The Conservancy's funding is appropriate at this time because each of the projects' benefits to coastal habitat is significant and the use of community volunteers in all of these projects provides added cost savings and an important public education component.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2013 - 2018 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective B** of the Conservancy's 2013 - 2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed suite of 2013 CWRGP projects collectively will enhance approximately 39 acres of coastal habitats including coastal wetlands and intertidal areas, and approximately 3 miles of stream corridors.

Consistent with **Goal 9, Objective A**, each of the proposed 2013 CWRGP projects will support programs or events that improve public understanding of coastal resources by involving communities and volunteers in coastal resource restoration.

Consistent with **Goal 9, Objective 9B** the Big Oak Canyon Habitat Restoration project will support the design and installation of interpretive or educational displays related to coastal and watershed resource education.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed suite of 2013 CWRGP projects are consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on November 10, 2011 in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The proposed projects are supported by elected officials, numerous community and nonprofit organizations, and local agencies. This includes the cities of Santa Barbara, Ventura, Compton, Playa del Rey, Santa Ana, Newport Beach and Carlsbad. Nonprofit organization support includes Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks, the Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy, the Concerned Resource and Environmental Workers, and South Coast Habitat Restoration. Further support comes from Santa Barbara County Supervisor Salud Carbajal, California assemblymember Das Williams, and U.S. Representative Louis Capps. Proposed projects for the CWRGP are vetted at local meetings to allow input from the local community and to ensure that projects represent local priorities.
4. **Location:** The 2013 suite of CWRGP projects are located within the coastal zone or coastal draining watersheds. The 2013 suite of CWRGP projects' locations span the five southernmost California coastal counties constituting the California Bight, from Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to the international border with Mexico. More specific information on each project location is provided in the Project Summary section, above.
5. **Need:** The CWRGP is not sustainable without Conservancy funding. Further, each of the 2013 suite of projects would not happen without Conservancy funding. The Mission Canyon Cape Ivy Eradication Project has no other source of funding identified for the project and cannot proceed without Conservancy funding. The Healthy Watershed Series project has matching funds available and Conservancy funding will provide necessary project staff support and bus transportation costs without which the project will not happen. The Ventura River Upper Estuary Volunteer Restoration and Wetland Education has additional funding sources but Conservancy funding will provide staff support and restoration tools essential for the project to proceed. The Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project provides match funding for technical support for the project. Conservancy funding will allow hiring of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and also supply essential tools and native plants needed for project completion. The Compton Creek Pilot Restoration Program has no additional sources of funding and will not happen without Conservancy funding. The Big Oak Canyon Habitat Restoration Project provides some match funding for personnel and equipment, but Conservancy funding will allow for the production of interpretive signage as well as supply needed restoration tools and equipment, curriculum development and project staff. The Santiago Park Nature Reserve Restoration project provides more than half of the project costs in match funding. Conservancy funding for this project will provide essential biological

technical support, volunteer coordination and native plant material. The Gospel Swamp Natural Area Restoration Program also provides close to half of the total project costs. Conservancy funding will provide for community restoration days coordination, invasive plant removal and educational program staff. Finally, the Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve North Shore Restoration provides match funding for a large portion of the project costs. Conservancy funding will provide critical project plan and site preparation, and removal of invasive plant species. Revegetation and maintenance costs will be covered by the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation, but the project will not be possible without Conservancy funding.

6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The CWRGP is regional by design and serves greater- than-local interest through the cumulative benefits of its multiple small acreage projects. The suite of 2013 projects helps restore native wetland habitat critical for migratory birds and commercially and recreationally important fish species. They also provide educational opportunities for people throughout the region to participate in on-the-ground habitat restoration activities.
7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve North Shore Restoration is the only one of the 2013 project sites detailed in the Project Summary section, above, located in an area vulnerable to sea level rise. The Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve North Shore Restoration is located at or near sea level. This project site has adequate surrounding buffer zone to allow for habitat migration and/or conversion considering a range of sea level rise scenarios for the years 2050 and 2100.

Additional Criteria

8. **Urgency:** All of the 2013 suite of CWRGP projects target invasive species for removal. Timely implementation of small invasive removal projects before these species can further spread helps prevent widespread dispersal and habitat destruction.

10. **Leverage**: See the Project Summary section above for specific details of each of the 2013 CWRGP projects' leverage of funding.

12. **Innovation**: All of the 2013 suite of CWRGP projects demonstrate innovation through the inclusion of a wide range and diversity of volunteers often targeting low-income and underserved communities and multi-generational community members.

13. **Readiness**: All of the 2013 suite of CWRGP projects described in the Project Summary section, above are ready to implement and to be completed within one to two years.

14. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals**: See Project History section, above.

16. **Cooperation**: The 2013 suite of CWRGP projects by design foster cooperation between the lead organization and the community in helping to enhance coastal resources. Multiple community organizations, nonprofits and local agencies are involved in each of the 2013 suite of CWRGP projects' implementation.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

Mission Canyon Cape Ivy Eradication Project: The County of Santa Barbara's Coastal Land Use Plan adopted in 1982 and republished in June, 2009 states that "the biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored…". The County of Santa Barbara Local Coastal Program (LCP) identifies streams as environmentally sensitive habitat areas that should be protected. The Mission Canyon Cape Ivy Eradication Project is consistent with the Santa Barbara County LCP because it will enhance the habitat resources at Mission Creek by removing exotic plant species and re-vegetating with native species.

Once Upon a Watershed's Healthy Watershed Series: The Ventura County Coastal Area Plan, last amended in September 2008, states that "The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored". The Once Upon a Watershed's "Healthy Watershed Series" Project will work to restore three riparian habitat sites in the Ventura River Watershed though educational programs.

Ventura River Upper Estuary Volunteer Restoration & Wetland Education: The Ventura County Coastal Area Plan, last amended in September 2008, states that "The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored". The Ventura River Upper Estuary Volunteer Restoration and Wetland Education Project will further the goals of the Ventura County Coastal Area Plan by restoring and maintaining riparian habitat surrounding the Ventura River. The Ventura County Coastal Area Plan cites an objective "To protect wetlands in the Central Coast and encourage their acquisition, restoration or enhancement by the State to perpetuate their value to onshore and nearshore coastal life, and to the people of California." The Ventura River Upper Estuary Volunteer and Wetland Education project will restore and protect wetland habitat and riparian areas that buffer wetland habitat, which is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Ventura County Coastal Area Plan.

Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project: Playa Del Rey is not within the jurisdiction of an local coastal plan, however the project is consistent with the goals of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Plan, created by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project in 1995, approved by the Conservancy in 2000, and last updated in 2008. The Los Angeles Conservation Corps Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project is consistent with the overall vision of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Plan and specifically pertains to Goal 6: Managing Invasive Species by "coordinating and funding public education and outreach on invasive species", and Goal 7: Restoring Urban Streams by removing invasive species and replanting native vegetation.

Compton Creek Pilot Restoration Project: The Compton Creek project is consistent with and helps achieve objectives in both the Compton Creek Watershed Management Plan and Compton Creek Watershed Implementation Strategy created and authorized by the Conservancy in June 2005. The project addresses specific goals in the plans of "improving wetland and riparian habitat quality and quantity, […] and involving the public in water quality goals through

outreach and education".

Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve (BLER) North Shore Restoration – Phase I: The City of Carlsbad Local Coastal Plan (LCP) designates Batiquitos Lagoon as environmentally sensitive habitat and as a priority for protection because it has been identified as a critical coastal wetland by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. This project is consistent with the Carlsbad LCP because it furthers efforts to restore and enhance the lagoon. The project is also consistent with the Batiquitos Lagoon Enhancement Plan, drafted by the Conservancy, because it furthers the overall goals of "enhancing the lagoon environment for wildlife" and "maintaining existing riparian and wetland habitat, and creating more marsh habitat".

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The CWRGP 2013 suite of projects under this authorization all are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) , under 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15304 (Section 15304), minor alterations to the land, water and/or vegetation and under 14 CCR Section 15333 (Section 15333), habitat restoration or enhancement projects not exceeding five acres in size. Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Exemption for each proposed project. A discussion of the applicability of the categorical exemptions for each project is provided below.

Mission Canyon Cape Ivy Eradication Project: The project will remove invasive species from upper Mission Canyon near the terminus of the Santa Barbara water tunnel using manual weeding techniques. The project is a minor project and is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15304, minor alterations of the land, water and/or vegetation and Section 15333small habitat restoration project that does not exceed five acres in size and assures the enhancement and restoration of habitat for plants and wildlife. Consistent with Section 15333 there will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to Section 15065; there are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed; and the project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. Consistent with Section 15333, the project involves revegetation of disturbed areas with native plant species, and the restoration or enhancement of habitat that will be carried out principally with hand labor and not mechanized equipment.

Once Upon a Watershed's Healthy Watershed Series: The project is a restoration and education program for 4^{th} to 6^{th} grade students, with field components located at three sites in the Ventura River Watershed. Student field activities include planting acorns, restoring native plants and trash removal activities at Ojai Meadow Preserve, Ventura River Estuary and beach, and Ventura River Steelhead Preserve. The project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15304 as minor alterations of the land, water and/or vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources or greater fish production. The project is further categorically exempt under Section 15333 as a small habitat restoration project that does not exceed five acres and assures the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, or

wildlife. Consistent with Section 15333, there will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to Section 15065; there are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed; and the project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. Consistent with Section 15333, the project involves revegetation of disturbed areas with native plant species, and stream or river bank revegetation, the primary purposes of which are to improve habitat for amphibians or native fish and to reduce or eliminate erosion and sedimentation. Consistent with Section 15333, the project will be carried out principally with hand labor and nomechanized equipment.

Ventura River Upper Estuary Volunteer Restoration & Wetland Education Project: The project involves monthly volunteer restoration events removing non-native vegetation and trash clean-up at the Ventura Hillsides Conservancy-owned Ventura River upper estuary "Willoughby Preserve". The project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15304 minor alteration in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas which result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources.

Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project: The Los Angeles Conservation Corps Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project will train inner-city youth in native plant identification, habitat restoration, and nursery operations to further restoration efforts along the southern bank of Ballona Creek in Playa Del Rey, Los Angeles, CA. The project is categorically exempt under Section 15304 minor alterations of the land, water and/or vegetation. The project is also exempt under Section 15333, as a small habitat restoration project that does not exceed five acres and assures the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife. Consistent with Section 15333, there would be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to Section 15065; there are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed; and the project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Compton Creek Pilot Restoration Project: The project will compare pilot restoration techniques on a small section of the earthen-bottom portion of Compton Creek. The project is categorically exempt under Section 15304 minor alterations of the land, water and/or vegetation. The project is also exempt under Section 15333, as a small habitat restoration project that does not exceed five acres and assures the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife. Consistent with Section 15333, there would be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to Section 15065; there are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed; and the project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. Consistent with Section 15333, the project involves revegetation of disturbed areas with native plant species, and stream or river bank revegetation, the primary purposes of which are to improve habitat for amphibians or native fish and to reduce or eliminate erosion and sedimentation.

Big Oak Canyon Habitat Restoration: The Big Oak Canyon Habitat Restoration Project will remove invasive species, plant native vegetation, and conduct environmental education activities in a previously settled seasonal tributary area of Big Oak Canyon. The project is categorically exempt under Section 15304 minor alterations of the land, water and/or vegetation. The project is also categorically under Section 15333 small habitat restoration project that does not exceed five acres in size and assures the enhancement and restoration of habitat for plants and wildlife. Consistent with Section 15333 there will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to Section 15065; there are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed; and the project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. Consistent with Section 15333 the project involves revegetation of disturbed areas with native plant species, and the restoration or enhancement of habitat that will be carried out principally with hand labor and no mechanized equipment.

The Gospel Swamp Natural Area Restoration Program: The project will remove non-native and invasive vegetation and plant native vegetation and is categorically exempt under Section 15304 minor alterations of the land, water and/or vegetation. The project is further categorically exempt under Section 15333as a small habitat restoration project that does not exceed five acres in size and assures the enhancement and restoration of habitat for plants and wildlife. Consistent with Section 15333, there will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to Section 15065; there are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed; and the project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Santiago Park Nature Reserve Restoration: The Santiago Park project will remove non-native and invasive plant species and seed and revegetate the area with native plants and is categorically exempt under Section 15304, as minor alterations of the land, water and/or vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas which result in improvement of habitat and wildlife resources. The project is further categorically exempt under Section 15333 as a small habitat restoration project that does not exceed five acres in size and assures the enhancement and restoration of habitat for plants and wildlife. Consistent with Section 15333, there will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to Section 15065; there are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed; and the project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve (BLER) North Shore Restoration – Phase I: The project will restore 1.75 acres of the north shore of Batiquitos Lagoon including planting of native vegetation and removal of invasive species. The project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15304 as minor alterations of the land, water and/or vegetation. The project is further categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15333, as a small habitat restoration project that does not exceed five acres in size and assures the enhancement and restoration of habitat for plants

and wildlife. Consistent with Section 15333 there will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to Section 15065; there are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed; and the project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.